



BOB KING, President



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PRINTED IN U.S.A.

INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE, AEROSPACE & AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS OF AMERICA-UAW

DENNIS WILLIAMS, Secretary-Treasurer

February 22, 2012

To: Senator Harp, Rep. Walker and Members of the Appropriations Committee

From: Julie Kushner, UAW Region 9A Director

Re: H.B. No. 5014 AN ACT MAKING ADJUSTMENTS TO STATE EXPENDITURES AND REVENUES FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2013.

Good evening. My name is Julie Kushner and I am the Director of United Auto Workers (UAW) Region 9A.

UAW represents thousands of legal aid attorneys and workers across the country and here in Connecticut. UAW Local 2320, the National Organization of Legal Service Workers (NOLSW) is our national local which provides services in states across the country to low income individuals dealing with domestic violence, homelessness, housing, lack of disability benefits and more.

I am here tonight to urge you to support and strongly advocate for two things:

1. The restoration of \$250,000 in the Judicial Branch legal aid funding line that was proposed to be reduced by the Governor.
2. A legal aid funding bill in the Judiciary Committee that would provide legal aid organizations in Connecticut with \$5.2 million.

As you know, these organizations have experienced extraordinary hardship over the last five years. Their main funding stream, IOLTA, has been reduced from \$20MM five years ago to a projected \$1MM this year. The bill before the Judiciary committee and the restoration of \$250,000 we seek tonight will at best stabilize these programs.

UAW Region 9A covers the New England states and New York metropolitan area. I can tell you that in the neighboring states of Massachusetts and New York, legal aid workers are also suffering but can and do rely upon funding from their states. Connecticut legal aid attorneys only get monies from the state generated from last year's filing fees bill – and even those funds are dwindling.

Our members are over-worked, under-resourced and under paid. Yet they have maintained unprecedented levels of professionalism and commitment to their clients and to their employer. They have all sustained pay cuts and reduced hours while managing growing and more complicated client loads and responsibilities. If this state is unable to sustain these programs the ripple effect ends at your door step with your constituents who cannot get services and assistance and have nowhere to go. An investment in these programs and our members pays for itself and we cannot afford to not to fix this problem.

**You will hear from many of our members and their clients tonight. I am here because I want you to know that the UAW stands together with our members, alongside their employer, and I urge you to do the same. Thank you.**